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ABSTRACT

In this issue of the "CEIC Review," commissioned papers for a national invitational conference on student resilience developed across contexts of family, work, culture, and community are summarized. The concept of resilience-promoting interventions has emerged from research and indicates that some children survive adversity without lasting damage. Research on the factors that influence resilience development has important implications for education, and the papers summarized in this issue provide implications for policy and practice. The following are included: (1) "The Well-Being of Children in a Changing Economy: Time for a New Social Contract in America" (Leslie S. Gallay and Constance A. Flanagan); (2) "Another Look at the Elephant: Child Care in the Nineties" (Deborah Lowe Vandell, Kim Dadisman, and Kathleen Gallagher); (3) "Maternal Employment Influences on Early Adolescent Development: A Contextual View" (Jacqueline V. Lerner and E. Ree Noh); (4) "The Economic and Psychological Dynamics of Single Motherhood and Nonresident Paternal Involvement" (Paul Florsheim); (5) "The Effects of the Mother's Employment Status on the Family and the Child" (Lois Wladis Hoffman); (6) "The Impact of Divorce on Adjustment during Adolescence" (Christy M. Buchanan); (7) "The Myths and Realities of African-American Fatherhood" (Edmund W. Gordon); (8) "Make Room for Daddy II: The Positive Effects of Fathers' Role in Adolescent Development" (Marc A. Zimmerman, Paul C. Notaro, and Deborah A. Salem); (9) "Passages to Adulthood: The Adaptation, Achievement, and Ambition of Children of Immigrants in Southern California" (Ruben G. Rumbaut); (10) "Agency and School Performance among Urban Latino Youth" (Leslie Reese, Kendall Kroesen, and Ronald Gallimore); (11) "Stressful Experiences and the Psychological Functioning of African-American and Puerto Rican Families and Adolescents" (Ronald D. Taylor and others); and (12) "Cultural Explanations for the Role of Parenting in the School Success of Asian Children" (Ruth K. Chao). (SLD)

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Sue Russell and Robert Sullivan, Editors

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Resilience Across Contexts: Family, Work, Culture, and Community
Recommendations from a National Invitational Conference

Margaret C. Wang, Director, National Center on Education in the Inner Cities at Temple University Center for Research in Human Development and Education

A number of societal risks pose serious challenges to families' well-being, many of which cut across divisions of class and race. These challenges include: changes in the labor market and economy; the increasing participation of mothers in the labor force; the changing nature of family structure and the composition of households; and the increase in the number of immigrant families. Key institutions in the lives of families can play a significant role in fostering families' capacity to adapt to the potential challenges they face. Places of employment or schools can promote resilience in children and families with such practices as providing daycare at the workplace, instituting adult education programs at school sites, and supporting interventions that promote the healthy development and academic success of children and families who live in circumstances that place them at risk.

In this issue of The CEIC *Review*, commissioned papers for a national invitational conference on resilience developed across the contexts of family, work, culture, and community are summarized. The concept of resilience-promoting interventions has emerged from research indicating that some children survive adversity without lasting damage. Such children tend to be motivated, independent, resourceful, and self-determined, and possess good interpersonal and cognitive problem-solving skills. Research focusing on furthering our understanding of the factors that influence resilience development can contribute to our capacity for designing interventions and determining public policy that will ultimately benefit all children and families.

The papers summarized in this issue of The CEIC *Review* are written by leading scholars in varied disciplines, including economics, developmental and educational psychology, education, and sociology. Their research focuses on emerging issues that have significant implications for policy and practice in such areas as employment and new technologies; maternal employment and family development; family structure and family life; immigration, migration, acculturation, and education of children and youth; and social and human services delivery. The overall goal of the conference and this publication is to take stock of what is known from research and practice on some of the challenges facing children and families for policy development and improvement of practices.

Some of the major questions discussed at the conference centering on families' efforts to cope with contemporary challenges to their functioning include the following:

- What are the mechanisms through which families' economic prospects influence children's or adolescents' psychosocial well-being? What impact does parent participation and experience in the labor market have on family functioning and children's adjustment?
- How does maternal employment influence children's and

(see **Resilience** on page 26)

The National Center on Education in the Inner Cities is a unit in the Temple University Center for Research in Human Development and Education, an interdisciplinary center devoted to fostering healthy developmental and educational success of children and families in this nation's urban communities. Inquiries about the work of the Center should be sent to Cynthia Smith, Director of Information Services, CRHDE, Temple University, 1301 Cecil B. Moore Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19122-6091.

The Well-Being of Children in a Changing Economy:

Time for a New Social Contract in America

Leslie S. Gallay and Constance A. Flanagan, The Pennsylvania State University

Since early in the 20th century, citizens in the United States have lived under an implied social contract. Based on the father-as-bread-winner model, this contract posited that the male head-of-household could earn an adequate wage to support his family and that society would provide social insurance in times of unemployment and retirement. Women and children were relegated to second place in a two-tiered system. Normally, they depended on the father. If he was missing, welfare was available to support mothers and dependent children.

Until recently, this contract was the norm, despite the emergence of women in the job force and the decline of the living wage. By the 1970s, however, its assumptions were obviously no longer valid. Increasingly, mothers were expected to work as a requirement of welfare. Then the United States entered into a "Great U-Turn," moving from an industrial/goods producing economy to one dominated by service and technology, with sizable numbers of industrial workers being laid off. In the 1980s and 1990s, family adjustment to these declining living standards became an object of study.

The central generalization from research during this period of decline is that accommodation to lower and less stable incomes creates stress for families. Compared to employed families, unemployed parents and their dependents are more likely to suffer from various somatic and psychosomatic disorders and have a much higher admission rate to hospitals. The responsibilities of parenting appear to exacerbate the strains of an adult's job loss. Longitudinal studies reveal that adaptation to unemployment is stressful not only for the laid-off worker, but also for the spouse and children.

A review of evidence from longitudinal studies of poverty and child outcomes suggests three conclusions:

- Effects of low income on children depend on the child outcomes measured. Whereas family income seems to impact the academic life chances of children, it is less strongly related to health and behavioral outcomes.
- The timing of decreased family income in a child's lifespan matters a great deal, with early childhood being a more vulnerable time with more enduring consequences.
- Increases to early childhood family income have the biggest payoff for children in lower income families.

Economic decline and industrial downsizing affect entire communities as well as individual families. The dependence of school districts on local property taxes means that educational opportunity is compromised when an industry abandons a town. Economic restructuring and deindustrialization, along with social policy decisions and declines in social spending, have resulted in a concentration of poverty in inner cities, especially among the young and among minority families.

The "New" Economy

According to economists, we are entering a new era in which low levels of unemployment will coexist with low inflation and steady economic growth. Although this seems to paint a rosy picture, two trends suggest that the new economy does not portend a secure future for all families. First, economic inequality continues to increase in spite of overall prosperity. Second, new jobs in the "new economy" require a number of accommodations in family life and child rearing.

The recent increase in employment has not been equitably distributed across society. Members of minority groups, especially minority-group males and those with lower levels of education, have not been included in the recovery. Between 1979 and 1993, real wages of full-time, male workers fell 22% for those without a high school degree and 12% for those with a high school degree, but rose 10% for workers with a college degree. While unemployment among White males stood at 4.3% in 1996, the rate for African-American males was more than twice that much, at 11.2%. Among African-American males with less than a high school education, the rate was 20.3%. These are the same groups where employed males have seen a decrease in their real wages over the past 20 years.

Underemployment is another growing problem. While unemployment for many is temporary, returning to work often implies a job slide into lower status positions or part-time jobs. Underemployment is concentrated among minority populations with less than a college education. Approximately

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15% of Hispanic males and 18% of African-American males were underemployed in 1996. Underemployed workers and their families are unlikely to receive either health benefits or pensions.

Nor is the erosion of family benefits in the new economy limited to marginal workers. For the past two decades, employment arrangements in the U.S. have been undergoing fundamental changes. Gone is the typical career paradigm characterized by lifetime employment and a pension upon retirement. More and more jobs are typified by independent contracting, temporary work, self-employment, and part-time work. In 1995, 34% of female and 25% of male workers were employed in "nonstandard" jobs, accounting for 29% of all jobs, many without benefits such as health insurance or pensions.

The new economy puts a premium on education and rewards those with the highest educational attainment. The obverse is also true. Low literacy has been linked to low productivity, high unemployment, low earnings, and high rates of welfare dependency. Discrimination and the lack of educational and economic resources, combined with increasing numbers of female-headed, single-parent families, contribute to increased joblessness among urban minority males.

Poverty also compromises children's health. The contrast in general well-being between poor and affluent children reveals the growing disparity in the U.S. High rates of anemia and some communicable diseases are reported. Exposure to drugs in utero places children at risk for diminished or delayed intellectual development. Inner-city African-American infants are also at disproportionate risk for health problems in infancy, including low birth weight and respiratory distress syndrome. Hispanic children face similar risks, experiencing elevated blood-lead levels, associated with mental function impairment, at twice the rate of White children.

Medicaid was designed to assist families in poverty with health services for their children, but cost increases, welfare reform, and tax cuts have resulted in increasing numbers of children being excluded from the system. At the same time, the increase in nonstandard work has resulted in a larger proportion of working families without private health insurance coverage. Even when coverage is available, providers often refuse to locate in inner-city neighborhoods, reducing access to health services. Lack of health insurance leads families to postpone medical care. The frightening increase in AIDS among minority infants is not only an indication of high levels of drug use among parents, but a reflection of an inadequate health care system in which medications that can prevent the in-vitro transmission of AIDS are not available to those without insurance coverage.

The ability of poor working families to care for sick children is also compromised by the lack of flexibility associated with their jobs. When illness strikes, parents must care for children who are unable to go to school or to a child care facility. For marginal and nonstandard workers, paid sick leave, vacation days, or personal days tend not to exist. The 1993 Family and Medical Leave Act does not adequately provide for current circumstances. The Act maintains the benefits and job of a parent for up to 12 weeks but does not allow for time off for children's most common medical problems. Moreover, the provisions of the Act do not apply equally to all working parents. To benefit, one has to have been employed for more than a year by the same employer and work in a company of more than 50 employees.

Implications for Children

The transformations resulting from the emergence of the new economy have led to a new social contract. Families will not only have to cope with both parents working, but with both parents continuing to educate themselves over the course of their lives. As the knowledge and information industries dwarf others, it will be the technologically adept who will survive. Inequities in income and employment opportunities will increasingly be linked to differences in educational attainment. Unless social support programs are designed to provide assistance, the dependents of low-skilled workers will inevitably suffer.

The increasing concentration of poverty within urban areas and among minority groups is also part of the definition of the new social contract. The reformulation of welfare policy places responsibility on individual parents to provide for their children. It also reconstructs our notions of what is in the best interests of children from one in which mothers are caretakers to one in which mothers are employees. Many current implementations of welfare reform require women on AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children, formerly ADC) to enroll in education programs, participate in job training, or find employment, necessitating child care. If a new social contract is being written by the new economic transformation, then society has the responsibility to provide the resources necessary to make education, job training, and

(see **Well-Being** on page 26)

Another Look at the Elephant: Child Care in the Nineties

Deborah Lowe Vandell, Kim Dadisman, and Kathleen Gallagher, University of Wisconsin-Madison

In the last 50 years, we have witnessed a dramatic change in our approach to child rearing, with the proportion of mothers who are employed steadily increasing. Between 1947 and 1997, the percentage of women with children under the age of six who were in the workforce rose from 12% to 64%. Changes in maternal employment have been accompanied by a dramatic increase in the use of nonmaternal child care, even during infants' first year.

Beginning with a trickle of research in the 1970s and swelling to an impressive array of studies in the 1990s, investigators have attempted to delineate the effects on children and families of this shift in the care of infants and preschoolers. Unfortunately, this research has resulted in wildly different pronouncements in both the popular press and in the scientific literature. Articles have concluded that daycare for young children is everything from detrimental, to having little impact, to socially and intellectually advantageous—sometimes within the same publication.

Taken in isolation and without qualification, child care pronouncements are reminiscent of the Indian folktale of the blind men and the elephant, where each blind man touches a different part of the elephant and then describes with great certainty what the elephant is like. The man who touches the elephant's torso describes a creature that is like a great wall, the man who touches the leg says the elephant is like a tree trunk, etc. Each man is absolutely certain that he is right and the others are wrong—and, in fact, each of the men *is* right, in a way. The elephant includes all of those parts, but to focus on one part to the exclusion of all others yields an inaccurate description. The elephant is altogether more complex, and each of the parts needs to be understood in relation to the other parts.

Many child care pronouncements suffer from a similar restricted vision, as researchers and pundits focus on one domain or area to the exclusion of others. Focus, in and of itself, is not the problem; the problem arises when one set of findings is overgeneralized to different types of child care settings, to other areas of development, and to different developmental periods. Like the elephant, child care must be viewed in all of its complexity, with each part having its own characteristics and features, but needs to be understood in relation to the other parts. Our child care elephant must be understood in relation to: (1) the parameters of the child care setting itself, (2) the characteristics of the family using the care, (3) the characteristics of the children in the care, and (4) extra-familial factors in the community. In addition, the effects of child care must be considered within specific developmental models and domains.

Parameters Within the Child Care Setting

The child care elephant's torso—the blind man's "great wall"—is composed of parameters that characterize the child care experience itself, including: (1) the quality of the care setting, (2) the quantity or amount of time in care, (3) the types of care settings that are used, (4) the stability of the care arrangements, and (5) the timing of when children begin care arrangements.

Quality of the care setting—viewed by many as the single most important element within the child care context—is evident in the kinds of experiences that children have, defined in substantial part by their caregivers. Are the caregivers sensitive and responsive? Do they provide cognitive and language stimulation appropriate for the child's age and needs? Do they provide their charges with opportunities to interact with and learn from peers? Are safety and health safeguards in place? Other important quality factors include child:adult ratio, class size, and the caregiver's educational background and specialized training.

Results regarding amount of time in care have been mixed, with some studies associating more hours with greater behavioral problems, and some associating more hours with better social skills and peer relationships. Types of settings can range from in-home care by a relative to child care homes and centers, with father care being the most common nonmaternal arrangement for infants. Stability can refer to the number of different arrangements children experience concurrently or sequentially, or the number of changes in caregiver within the same setting. And questions about the initial timing of child care have especially been raised in reference to children's relationships with their mothers.

A clear lesson from the research of the last 10 years is that one child care feature cannot be understood in isolation from other child care features. For example, effects associated with early onset of care are tempered

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by amount of time spent in care and quality of care. As a result of this interdependence, multiple child care features must be considered simultaneously as we ask questions such as: Do child care hours affect child development when quality is controlled? Is stability of care important when quality is controlled? Are effects of poor quality child care exacerbated when it is used for more hours or when it is begun earlier in children's lives?

Other Connections To Be Considered

Studying parameters within the child care setting, quite complex in itself, is further complicated by the characteristics of the family using the care, of the children being cared for, and of the community at large—the front legs, head, and hind legs of the child care elephant, so to speak.

There are differences in families whose children are in nonmaternal care and those who are not; and among families using child care, there are differences in the type of care they select, how many hours of care is used, when care begins, and the quality of care being utilized. Conversely, families are influenced by the child care arrangements they select, with changes in parents' emotional well-being and marital satisfaction shown to be associated with initial timing of child care. Family characteristics can act in combination with child care characteristics to either mitigate or exacerbate child care effects.

Individual child characteristics include age, gender, temperament, maturity, and physical health. As with family factors, these characteristics serve as selection factors, resulting in placement into different child care settings, and they moderate some relations between child care and children's adjustment. The limited studies of individual child characteristics in relation to the child care context underscore the need for further consideration of these issues.

Community factors include the availability of extended family or friends to serve as caregivers on a regular or emergency basis, workplace child care or policies related to parental leave, and governmental policies regarding child care.

Child care effects must be considered over time—adding another level of complexity to our child care elephant—and three over-time patterns in particular should be considered: effects that may dissipate over time, effects that may emerge later in a child's development, and effects that may reflect the cumulative impact of child care.

Domain specificity should also be taken into account. Developmental domains include cognitive functioning, language development, preacademic and academic skills, social competence, behavior problems, and physical well-being. It is likely that the interplay between child care and family or child characteristics differs across domains.

The Challenge of Child Care Research

The complexity of child care makes research a daunting task, though it is possible using a two-pronged strategy. By focusing on specific questions and issues within the child care arena, while recognizing the broader framework within which child care is situated, studies have been designed and will continue to be designed that, in combination with other studies, help inform us about critical child care issues. The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) Study of Early Child Care—the most ambitious and comprehensive study of child care—used such a two-pronged approach. Reports from the study have focused on the five child care setting parameters listed above. Selection factors were identified and controlled for in multivariate analyses in which contributions of blocks of family and child characteristics were tested as predictors of child "outcomes," followed by consideration of child care parameters as predictors of child outcomes. These reports have supported the utility of: considering multiple child care parameters; examining these parameters in relation to family and child characteristics; considering concurrent, cumulative, and lagged developmental models; and examining domain-specific relations between child care and children's development.

Outcomes examined by the NICHD study included infant-mother attachment, intellectual performance, language production, language comprehension, observed negativity, and report of behavior problems by mother and by caregiver. As an example, one finding showed that the best predictors of the quality of infant-mother attachment were found to be the mothers' sensitivity observed during home observations and mother's psychological adjustment; none of the child care variables, considered alone or in combination, were related to children's attachment to mother.

Conclusion

The effects of child care are dependent not only on the specific parameters of the child care context itself, but also on their interplay with family, child, and community characteristics, and the psychological domains and developmental models being

(see **Another Look** on page 26)

Maternal Employment Influences on Early Adolescent Development:
A Contextual View

Jacqueline V. Lerner and E. Ree Noh, Boston College

Early researchers who studied the effects of maternal employment assumed that children were being deprived of something when their mothers were employed. Children were grouped by employment status of the mother, but the resulting research findings were inconsistent. The examination of the particular experiences of the children of employed mothers proved to be a more fruitful undertaking, where an evaluation of the family context and what employment means for family functioning is essential.

Within the family, the mother has always been regarded as the primary caregiver and socializer of her children, but the mother-child relationship exists within the context of family, where each family member both influences and is influenced by every other family member. The family, in turn, is embedded in a system of neighborhood, community, and culture that impacts both the developing adolescent and the family. These factors and others differ from one family to the next, and determine in part whether maternal employment constitutes a risk for a particular child.

Characteristics of Mothers' Work

Whether they are involved in the work force because of personal fulfillment, economic necessity, boredom, or a combination of these and other factors, most mothers enter or return to the work force shortly after the birth of their first child. Statistics show that most children will spend some portion of their time in a family where their mother is employed. Maternal employment affects each family differently, so it is difficult to make generalizations based on existing research.

Part of the difficulty lies in the fact that the picture of maternal employment is not similar across racial-ethnic groups. For example, a woman's earning power is influenced by her racial-ethnic status, and African-American and Hispanic women are more likely to rely on their strong ties to family as a source of social support. Caucasian women in lower income groups are more likely to find jobs that match their educational level.

The risk for lower income women of any racial group is that they typically do not have the funds to hire help with household chores; thus housework becomes a "second shift," which significantly increases their level of stress. The management of work and family places stresses on the family, and solutions are rarely simple. The difference between the effects of full-time and part-time employment has only recently received attention in the literature and needs to be considered in any evaluation of maternal employment effects.

Reasons for Working

The two most common motives that have led women into the labor force are economic need and personal fulfillment; but most women would not leave their jobs even if economic pressures were reduced. The reasons that a mother works are important to evaluate when studying the effect on her child's development. How the child perceives the mother's employment and the effect it has on the family are significant. The child in a low-income family, aware that the mother's job is essential to keep the family out of poverty, may respond to changes differently than a child in a middle-income family who does not believe the mother needs to work and resents the time it takes away from the family.

The particular characteristics of the mother's job—including job flexibility, demands, independence, and wages—will affect her moods, satisfactions, and interactions with the family. The amount of support she receives from her family and others will also contribute to how the family functions.

Influences of Maternal Employment on Young Adolescent Development

Parents continue to be involved in the management of their child's behavior throughout childhood, but adolescents are allowed more latitude in decision making and unsupervised activities than are younger children. The young adolescent, learning to negotiate the tasks of independence, autonomy, separation, and identity development, still relies on the support, nurturance, and expertise of parents.

In middle-income families, maternal employment may serve to bolster the relationship between fathers and their children, probably because young adolescents tend to spend more time alone with fathers when mothers are employed. But in low-income families, maternal employment tends to be accompanied by a less favorable father-son relationship, perhaps because the mother's need to work may be interpreted by a son as the

father's failure to take care of the family.

Children in lower income families tend to do better academically if their mothers are employed, but factors more influential to a child's academic performance seem to include the mother's degree of satisfaction with her work situation, the balance of work and child care, and the division of labor for household chores.

Young Adolescent Adjustment and Career Aspirations

The influence of maternal employment on children's educational and career aspirations is also linked to the mother's level of satisfaction, for example, a mother's dissatisfaction with a low-level job might cause her child to have higher career aspirations. Other findings associating maternal employment and adolescent development include:

- Sons of working mothers show better personality and social adjustment, have better family relations, and show better interpersonal relations at school;
- Daughters of working mothers are more outgoing, independent, and motivated;
- Children of working mothers appear to be less sex-role stereotyped;
- For young adolescents in middle-income families, whether or not the mother worked yielded no significant differences in problem behavior, social competence, or substance use; and
- Girls on their own after school may be more susceptible to peer pressure and more likely to engage in antisocial activity than were their adult-supervised peers.

An Evaluation of Risk

Are young adolescents at risk when their mothers are employed? Some adolescents, under some conditions, are definitely affected—though for some the effects are positive and for others they are negative. Family financial stress may increase the chances that the mother's absence from the home will lead to risk, but a lack of child supervision in the after-school hours, even in financially well-off families, could lead to problems.

Maternal education may be a more powerful predictor of child academic outcomes than maternal employment status. In lower income groups, maternal employment is positively related to children's academic performance, but this association seems to also depend on the mother's own educational attainment and expectations for her child.

Young adolescents still require parental monitoring as they begin to engage in self-regulation, but risks could be lessened for children if the conditions associated with problems were addressed.

Future Directions: Implications for Social Policy

The impact of maternal employment on child development is an issue that illustrates the potential for collaboration between scholars and decision makers. Elected officials are presented with an ever-growing number of funding and policy requests by, among others, mothers seeking jobs with health care benefits, child care providers concerned about licensing standards, private employers questioning the complexity of parental-leave proposals, social-service administrators seeking legislation to help low-income women work their way off public assistance, and educational administrators cautioning against asking public schools to absorb the costs of after-school programs.

The fastest growing family form in the late twentieth century is the single-parent household, 90% of which are headed by women. Single-parent families are more likely to live in poverty than any other family grouping in the Unites States, and employment is essential if single mothers hope to escape the circumstance of poverty. Most single female parents receive little social or emotional support, causing a high level of job-family role strain and decreased physical and emotional well-being. Employed mothers are more likely to be forced to leave their young adolescent children alone after school, a situation that could be problematic.

The persistent struggle of single mothers to rise above poverty indicates a need for public policymakers to equalize male and female incomes through a reconsideration of comparable worth—equal pay for equal work—proposals. Government and private employers are encouraged to maintain a commitment to affirmative action in recruitment, hiring, and promotion, in order to ensure a gender-balanced work force at all levels of responsibility. Finally, public and private decision makers are urged to support the family support benefits and flexible work options discussed below.

Flexible Work Arrangements Are Optimal for Families

Public and private policymakers are encouraged to become familiar with research literature documenting the benefits of flexible work arrangements—flex time, job sharing, permanent part-time, telecommuting or home work, peak-time work, and voluntarily reduced work time—for those balancing work and child rearing. Studies indicates that these options are preferred by many working mothers and

(see **Maternal Employment** on page 26)

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The Economic and Psychological Dynamics of Single Motherhood and Nonresident Paternal Involvement

Paul Florsheim, University of Utah

The proportion of children growing up in single-mother households has increased dramatically over the past 30 years. This increase has been especially sharp among African-American families, for whom high rates of unemployment make it difficult for young fathers to fulfill their traditional role as providers. Although many children function well in single-mother households, the phenomenon of single motherhood and father absence is associated with well-documented risks, including poverty, maternal stress, and problematic parenting practices. This raises two important questions: What can be done to facilitate the healthy development of children who grow up in single-mother households? And what can be done to encourage the positive participation of nonresident fathers in the lives of their children?

Several factors account for the difference between nonresident fathers who remain involved and those who do not. Children who report a positive relationship with their noncustodial fathers appear to be at lower risk for behavioral/emotional problems than children who have no relationship with their fathers, or those who report a negative relationship. The effect of paternal involvement on child development is also related to the quality of the father's relationship with the mother of his child. Paternal contact was found in one study to be associated with greater risk for the development of child problems when it was accompanied by high levels of interparent conflict.

Proponents of both the economic and cultural explanations for the rising rate of single-mother households have failed to clearly articulate the mechanisms through which economic disadvantage or cultural beliefs influence a woman's decision to have children out of wedlock or a father's decision to abandon his children. The fundamental premise of this article is that one or several of the following psychological factors moderate the relationships among economic disadvantage, ethnicity, single motherhood, and father absence:

- *Poverty.* Children in single-mother households are three times more likely than children in two-parent households to be living in poverty, and a large body of evidence indicates that poverty has dramatically negative effects on child developmental outcomes.
- *Maternal Depression.* Single mothers (particularly economically disadvantaged single mothers) are at heightened risk for depression and other psychiatric problems, which, in turn, can hinder their children's development.
- *Parenting Practices.* Because the task of single parenting involves meeting a different set of demands than that of dual parenting, the functioning of single- and two-parent families should be interpreted cautiously. Nonetheless, most of the research on the parenting practices of single mothers indicates that, compared to mothers in two-parent households, they are less able to maintain a developmentally appropriate mix of control and autonomy-granting behavior. A single mother's ability to function as an effective parent, however, is moderated by the quality and quantity of support she receives.
- *Extended Family Involvement.* The tendency among single mothers to rely on extended family members is considered an adaptive response to adverse circumstances. Extended family members often increase the resilience of a single-parent family.

Toward a Model for Predicting Paternal Involvement

Cultural or economic explanations are usually given for the racial/ethnic discrepancies in the rates of divorce and out-of-wedlock childbirth. One explanation is that African-American men and women are less likely to marry because out-of-wedlock childbirth has become an increasingly acceptable alternative to marriage. The cross-ethnic research on attitudes about marriage does not, however, indicate that African-American men or women value marriage less than do other ethnic groups, or define the role of fathers differently than Anglo-American men and women. On the other hand, if cultural practices are defined as a set of adaptive strategies to social and environmental conditions, then increases in the divorce rate and out-of-wedlock childbirth might be seen as culturally based.

The relationship between a young man's employment status and his level of involvement with his child is moderated by several psychological factors:

Role Strain. The psychological stress associated with failing to live

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up to accepted social roles is a common problem among inner-city minority fathers. The absence of employment opportunities or job security for a young father might lead to self-handicapping behavior, lowered expectations for achievement, and strained relationships between male and female parents. Unwed and divorced fathers also experience confusion about the role they occupy in their children's lives. The insecurity and uncertainty many men feel about their paternal role, coupled with the discomfort of having to negotiate with their ex-partners, can provide a powerful disincentive for remaining actively engaged as fathers.

Parenting Stress. When mothers experience high levels of stress and low levels of support, they are at greater risk for engaging in negative parenting practices. Data on two-parent families indicate that high stress will affect a father's parenting as well. Whereas highly stressed mothers and custodial fathers are at risk for becoming negatively engaged with their children, it seems likely that highly stressed nonresident fathers would be at increased risk for disengagement. If parenting is perceived as a nonessential (avoidable) source of stress, then the nonresident father may feel motivated to seek relief by distancing himself from his family responsibilities.

Psychological Dysfunction. There is some evidence that unwed fathers function less adequately than married fathers. Moreover, the psychological problems of young unwed fathers appear to predate the occurrence of fatherhood, influencing their decision to avoid marriage, and subsequently impeding their ability to function as fathers. This would suggest that young fathers would benefit from an intervention, perhaps during their partner's pregnancy, that addressed psychological problems that have an impact on interpersonal and vocational functioning.

Paternal Aggression. When a nonresident father remains actively involved with his child and has a history of aggressive behavior, it seems likely that the risk of child abuse will increase. Moreover, children exposed to nonresident fathers who have a history of violence are at greater risk for the development of behavior problems. Thus, under some circumstances—for example, if a father has been violent toward his child or his partner—it may be in the best interest of the child to limit or prevent paternal contact. This raises an important question: Is male aggression related to paternal absence, and if so, is paternal absence sometimes adaptive? Although the link between male aggression and father absence has not been adequately researched, it seems plausible that young men who are prone to violence may either distance themselves from their children or be prevented from having contact with their children by the mother, who functions as a gatekeeper.

Investment in Offspring Born to More Current Partners. When men remarry, their involvement with children from a previous marriage or relationship tends to diminish. Men who perceive starting a new family with a different partner as an opportunity to "move on" are at greater risk for abandoning children from previous involvements.

Conflict Between Co-parents. Conflict between a single mother and her child's father is a powerful disincentive for continued paternal contact. Three common sources of interparent conflict are financial support, lack of access to children, and loss of the relationship with the child's mother.

Attachment. Although attachment researchers have tended to study the mother-infant bond, in recent years interest has been shown in the determinants and consequences of father-child attachment processes. This research indicates that a father's attachment history may be an important predictor of his capacity to function as an attachment figure, and that the quality of the emotional bond between a father and his children will be reciprocally related to his level of involvement over time. Thus, fathers who participate in their children's caretaking, and who are seen by their children as a source of comfort and security, are more likely to remain actively involved, facilitating a deepening level of attachment.

Implications for Building Resilience Among Men at Risk for Becoming Absent Fathers

Relatively little is known about absent fathers because the father's contribution to a child's development has only recently begun to be studied and because the very absence of nonresident fathers makes them difficult to assess. Resiliency research identifies factors that might begin to explain how some nonresident fathers provide continuous economic and emotional support, despite the difficulty of doing so. Such an understanding will be useful in developing programs that increase the economic viability of those who are at greatest risk for becoming absent fathers, and diminish the conflicts that accompany the difficult task of co-parenting a child born out of wedlock.

Programs intended to boost the resilience of single-parent families must also address the issue of economic opportunity. Single mothers and nonresident fathers are likely to benefit from

(see **Paternal Involvement** on page 27)

The Effects of the Mother's Employment Status on the Family and the Child

Lois Wladis Hoffman, University of Michigan

Maternal employment rates have risen steadily from about 9% in 1940 to 70% in 1996 among mothers with children under 18. The rate of employment for married mothers of infants age 1 or under almost doubled between 1975 and 1995, from 30.8% to 59.0%. In 1960, 18.6% of the all married mothers of preschoolers were employed, but by 1996, that rate had jumped to 62.7%.

The changes in maternal employment rates have been accompanied by many other changes in family life. Family size is smaller, modern technology has diminished the amount of necessary housework and food preparation, women are more educated, marriages are less stable, life expectancy has increased, expectations for personal fulfillment have expanded, and traditional gender roles have been modified and are less widely held. The purpose of this article is to provide an overview of the effects of a mother's employment status on child outcomes and to identify the variables that have emerged as mediators for those outcomes, particularly the father's role, the mother's state of well-being, and patterns of parent-child interaction.

Differences Between Children of Employed and Nonemployed Mothers

Most studies that have compared the children of employed and nonemployed mothers on child outcome measures such as indices of cognitive and socioemotional development have not indicated significant differences. Patterns that have been revealed through past research include the following:

- Daughters of employed mothers have higher academic achievement, greater career success, more nontraditional career choices, and greater occupational commitment.
- Among children in poverty, in both two-parent and single-mother families, children with employed mothers scored higher on cognitive and socioemotional indices.
- Daughters of employed mothers have been found to be more independent, particularly in their interactions with peers in a school setting, and to score higher on socioemotional adjustment measures.
- Sons and daughters of employed mothers have less traditional sex-role ideologies.

The Father's Role

One of the differences in family patterns noted in families where the mother is employed is the father's more active participation in household tasks and child care. Two possible consequences of this increased participation of fathers have been suggested. First, it relieves the stress of the dual role of the mother. Second, the increased participation of fathers has been found to extend across the lines of the traditional division of household labor. A recent study conducted at the University of Michigan found that this merging of roles leads to less gender stereotyping by children. When mothers were employed and fathers helped with child care, girls believed that women were competent in a broad range of areas. This belief was related to a higher sense of efficacy and higher scores on achievement tests for daughters.

One hypothesis holds that father-child interaction is cognitively stimulating, especially with respect to competence in math. This hypothesis derives from earlier research which compared achievement test scores of children in single-mother families and two-parent families and found such advantages for the latter group. These results, however, do not imply that father involvement has a special advantage, but they may imply that the benefits for children stem from having an additional adult of either gender involved in their upbringing. In the Michigan study, higher scores on achievement tests in language, reading, and math were found for children with employed mothers across class, marital status, and ethnicity. When fathers helped with child care there was an additional advantage. More play with fathers, however, made no difference.

The Mother's Sense of Well-Being

Another aspect of family life that may link the mother's employment status to effects on the child is the mother's sense of well-being. Numerous studies have compared employed mothers to full-time homemakers on various indices of mental health and life satisfaction. Most of this research has found a higher level of satisfaction among the employed, for both professional and blue-collar workers. In addition, employed mothers have been found to score lower on psychosomatic symptoms, measures of depression, and various stress indicators. Furthermore, employment has been shown to be a source of psychological support in times of family difficulties, although these effects can be moderated by the

mother's attitude toward the job, by the stability of her child care arrangements, and by the father's participation in child care. In the Michigan study, employed mothers in the blue-collar class had lower depression scores than full-time homemakers, and they used less authoritarian discipline and were less permissive. The mothers' sense of well-being mediated the relationship between employment and discipline styles.

Child Rearing Patterns

Mother-Infant Interaction. Research on parent-child interaction has been conducted primarily with infants and preschoolers, specifically involving the quality of mother-child interaction, home environment, and parent-child attachment with infants. Findings indicate that full-time employed mothers spend less time with their infants and preschoolers than part-time and nonemployed mothers, but this effect diminishes with maternal education. Differences also diminish with the age of the child. Studies also have shown that employed mothers are more interactive with their infants when they are with them.

Independence, Autonomy-granting, and Achievement. Encouragement of independence and autonomy-granting behavior may be the link between mothers' employment status and child outcomes. This encouragement of independence is also consistent with the situational demands of the dual role of mother and wage earner. New support for the idea that employed mothers encourage independence in their daughters is provided in a recent study conducted with a sample of low-income, single-mother families with a child between the ages of 10 and 12. In this study, daughters of full-time employed mothers reported a greater emphasis on independence and achievement, indicated higher scholastic competence, and showed higher academic performance in school. These findings might also be related to differences in outcomes on the basis of gender between daughters and sons of employed mothers. Encouragement of independence is particularly valuable for daughters, who sometimes receive too little.

Ethnicity. Most of the research on maternal employment has been conducted without regard to ethnicity, with most samples consisting primarily of European Americans. In a few instances, a sufficient number of African Americans has made it possible to examine ethnicity, and some studies conducted with low-income families have included an exclusively African-American sample. In addition, a few studies have examined maternal employment effects in all-Hispanic samples, but few other ethnic groups have been selected for separate consideration.

Hypotheses have been proposed to explain why the implications of maternal employment for families and children might be different for African Americans than for other groups. One possibility is that, due to the longer history of maternal employment in African-American families, social patterns and family interactions have accommodated to maternal employment, making it more socially accepted, and even expected. Furthermore, because of economic insecurity and the lack of employment opportunities for African-American men, the mother's employment is a major contribution toward economic stability. The expectation drawn from these considerations was that maternal employment will have more positive effects among African Americans. However, in the recent Michigan study, the relationships between the mothers' employment and child outcomes were the same, once socio-economic status was controlled.

Conclusions

A mother's employment may have effects, both positive and negative, on a child's social and academic competence, but these effects seem to be indirect and mediated through the family environment. Three aspects of the family environment seem to mediate child outcomes of maternal employment: the father's role, the mother's sense of well-being, and parental orientations toward independence and autonomy.

First, if fathers in families with an employed mother engage in more child care and household tasks, as most studies have found, gender-role traditionalism may be decreased for both parents and children, and this trend may operate to increase the independence and achievement of daughters. In addition, some data suggest that increased interaction with fathers may be beneficial for the cognitive competence of both sons and daughters, but it is not clear whether the father in the employed-mother family simply compensates for the mother's diminished availability or actually enhances the overall level of attention children receive.

Second, existing data indicate that, on the whole, maternal employment is likely to have positive effects on maternal mental health, with more consistent evidence for the lower than for the middle class. Other variables have also been shown to modify the mental health advantage of employment. One earlier study found that the father's help with child care was a necessary condition for positive maternal mental health, but the

(see **Employment Status** on page 27)

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The Impact of Divorce on Adjustment During Adolescence

Christy M. Buchanan, Wake Forest University

Based on current figures, about half of the children in the U.S. will experience a parental divorce before they reach the age of 18. In African-American families, the rates of divorce and separation consistently exceed this average. Thus, divorce is an important issue for anyone concerned with the well-being of our nation's youth. Although research indicates that patterns of adjustment after divorce vary greatly, certain factors are linked to better child outcomes.

Risk Factors

Financial stress is one risk factor for poor outcomes. In the 1980s, only 61% of single women with minor children had a child support agreement, and only about two-thirds of child support owed was collected. State and federal enforcement of child support payments has increased since that time, but divorce is still associated with economic decline for children. Moreover, enforcing child support is difficult and often unsuccessful, and amounts awarded are inadequate—especially in the common case where a mother's income is low or nonexistent. Divorced fathers have a substantially higher standard of living than divorced mothers, who typically have custody of children.

Although most children continue to live primarily with their mothers after divorce, both father and joint custody arrangements have become more common. The data indicate that adolescents can fare well or poorly in many arrangements, but a slightly higher risk is associated with father custody, and a slightly lower risk with joint custody.

Most studies concerned with children's adjustment to divorce have looked at preadolescent children. One study showing that children with a history of psychological problems will have greater difficulty after parental separation, however, has implications for adolescents. Similarly, because most studies on parent-child relationships after divorce focus on the mother due to the prevalence of maternal custody, these results are most readily available for examination. Consequently, studies of both children and adolescents support the importance of a relationship with the mother that is emotionally close, affectionate, and low in conflict.

Adolescents in joint custody arrangements appear to benefit from maintaining close relationships to two custodial parents. The importance of a close relationship between sole-custodial fathers and their children, or between noncustodial parents and their children, is more equivocal. The potential benefits of a close relationship with the custodial parent seem to be stronger and more consistent in mother custody than in father custody. Closeness to the father was not directly linked to better adjustment for adolescents whose fathers had custody unless they were also close to their mothers. Benefits of closeness to the father—even when he is the primary custodial parent—are more likely to be dependent on other factors, including other relationships.

Limited support exists for the hypothesis that children suffer after divorce due to loss of one parent. More consistently supported is the hypothesis that continued closeness to a noncustodial parent is associated with better adolescent adjustment. Gestures on the part of the noncustodial parent such as remembering birthdays and holidays may help the child almost as much as a continuing close relationship.

Also important are those relationships children have with each parent simultaneously, referred to as "triadic" relationships. Three important patterns of triadic relationships have been identified with respect to marital conflict and divorce: (a) loyalty conflicts; (b) alignment of the child with one parent or the other; and (c) withdrawal of the child from both parents.

Several investigations link loyalty issues to negative child outcomes such as self-blame, depression, and behavioral problems. In fact, triadic relationships seem to be a more important predictor of poor outcomes than parental conflict alone. Parental behaviors linked to negative outcomes include:

- Asking a child to carry messages to the other parent;
- Asking a child questions about the other parent's home;
- Making a child feel uncomfortable talking about the other parent or home; and
- Degrading the other parent in the child's presence.

Research from an earlier era indicated that the emotional stress of divorce could interfere with a custodial mother's parenting of preschool and school-aged children. In the first two years after divorce, mothers were shown to be less responsive to their children, less patient, more controlling and coercive in discipline, and less able to maintain organized household routines. This set of less effective parenting qualities has come to be known as "diminished parenting," and is believed to be responsible, at least in part, for the behavior problems often seen in children in

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the first two years following divorce (especially among boys). The model also indicates that parenting typically improved by the two-year mark, often accompanied by an improvement in children's behavior.

Studies of adolescents have also documented parental disengagement. Single parents, on average, show less parental involvement, monitoring, and control, and their adolescents report more autonomy, when compared to parents and adolescents in two-parent families. Disengaged parenting has been linked to worse adjustment among adolescents in both divorced and nondivorced homes. Lack of monitoring by custodial fathers is one of the primary reasons that adolescents living with their father may be somewhat less well adjusted than other adolescents.

Other studies indicate that parents should remain closely involved with the child, but, at the same time, should not be overly controlling. In these studies, coercive control was the most powerful predictor of problems, more powerful than loss of time spent with the child, companionship, daily involvement with the child, and frequency of paternal visitation.

Consistency across parents is important in nondivorced families, and divorce raises the probability of inconsistency. Inconsistent parenting has been linked to higher levels of depression and antisocial behavior in adolescents. Thus, apart from the quality of individual parenting, the correspondence between parental approach appears important for adolescent adjustment.

Recommendations and Conclusions

Several design and measurement problems are common in studies of children's postdivorce adjustment. For example, although family and parenting characteristics may lead to poor outcomes for children, it is not clear whether certain "at-risk" characteristics arise primarily from divorce or predate it. Furthermore, a reporter bias may be at work as well if links between hypothesized predictors and outcomes emerge only (or emerge most strongly) when both predictor and outcome are measured by the same reporter. Policymakers need to know whether factors such as ethnicity, predivorce socioeconomic status, and religious orientation matter with respect to divorce or interventions for divorcing families. Yet, for most investigators, it is difficult to obtain large enough samples to test for multiple influences and interactions.

Overall, research indicates that divorce raises the risk of problems for adolescents slightly, but the extent of behavioral and psychological problems among adolescents is highly variable. To the extent that policy can modify family relationships, improvements could be substantial, as research repeatedly demonstrates that aspects of the family environment have a stronger relation to adolescent adjustment than does family structure itself.

Increased efforts to help parents during and after divorce with their parenting efforts may be beneficial. Help is now primarily available through the legal system or through mental health professionals, yet a minority of divorcing couples seek these services. Services that are less expensive, more widely available, and more easily accessible might increase the number of divorcing families that could benefit from the knowledge research provides on successful adaptation to divorce.

One extremely important aspect of enhancing family relationships is to help ex-spouses reduce or manage their conflict. Helping couples avoid the adversarial legal system may be beneficial. Many states now mandate mediation for couples who cannot agree on custody or other issues. Research suggests that mediation can be effective in lowering conflict and increasing cooperation and communication between divorcing parties. Mediation may also be linked to better behavioral outcomes for children. After initial legal decisions are resolved, postdivorce interventions could help couples find ways to manage any ongoing conflict so that it is least detrimental to their children.

Custody and visitation decisions are amenable to policy interventions as well, although no one arrangement is best for adolescents. If parents are not in high conflict, or can manage conflict well, joint custody may be beneficial for adolescent children. However, the families that come to the attention of the legal system are generally not low in conflict. A legal presumption for custody awards to go to the primary caretaker (usually but not always the mother) may be the best legal option. Such a presumption has the advantage of continuity of care, as well as enhancing the likelihood that warm parent-child relationships and effective parenting will continue after divorce. Research findings, however, should not be used against structural arrangements that appear to be less beneficial (e.g., father custody, or custody of a cohabiting parent). Efforts should be made to assure that parents in such arrangements receive support and information about the special challenges they face. In addition, more effort should be placed on creating policies that will strengthen marriages and parenting before divorce takes place, and supporting single parents and their children more effectively when divorce does occur. ▣

The Myths and Realities of African-American Fatherhood

Edmund W. Gordon, Yale University

In its narrowest construction, fatherhood is the status assigned to one who contributes the sperm that fertilizes the ovum, a status often established by belief but determinable by DNA. In a much broader construction, father is the name given to the male who, often together with a female, guides, nurtures, provides for, and protects the development of other persons thought to be his issue and responsibility—a status that can only be established through behavior, experience, and practice.

The Functions of the Human Family

Given the relatively long period of infancy and childhood and the limited number of human behaviors that are preprogrammed by instinct, humans depend on social interactions for the development and learning of their complex adaptive capacities. Early in the evolution of the human species, the family emerged as a structure through which such nurturance, protection, and socialization could be provided. Thus the modern family has emerged as a system for the sheltered management and mediation of the resources necessary for human development—now the modern family's principal function. Such resources include economic, material, and nutritional resources, as well as personal and social relationships and power. These relationships, power, and resources can be better accessed and managed in kinship-group situations, and their mediation involves complementary rather than unilateral functions.

Fatherhood and Family Structures

Patterns of family life in the latter half of the twentieth century are convincing of the observation that there is no best structure, and certainly no single structure, by which families are organized. Families are referred to in their various configurations: single, dual, and multiple parent; same sex, different sex, gay, and lesbian parent; and absentee parent. Families are less likely to be referred to in terms of those social structures that enable families to function, the social structures of availability and denial of human resource capital. Such forms of capital include financial capital, health capital (physical developmental integrity, health and nutritional condition, etc.), human capital (social competence, tacit knowledge, and other education-derived abilities as personal or family assets), and pedagogical capital (supports for appropriate educational treatment in family, school, and community).

Traditionally, in technologically advanced societies, responsibility for the provision and control of many of these forms of capital are thought of as falling on the father. In reality, these human resources are genderless except for their deliberate usurpation and control by a chauvinistic male power structure. Within this tradition, however, material and social-psychological manifestations of capital are expected to be the special domain and responsibility of the father. It is this aspect of patriarchy that is especially problematic for African-American males. What is often not factored into the discussion is the unequal distribution of access to such capital, and the systematic deprivation of the African-American males from the exercise of access to and control over such resources in adequate amounts to enable wholesome family life. Without regard to gender roles, the structures of resource adequacy are a ubiquitous force that frustrates the integrity of many families from low status groups. Some investigators see this set of problems as being at the core of the problem of African-American families.

African-American Male Status

Questions concerning the development and status of African-American males are most appropriately approached from the perspectives provided by the several extant conceptions of the nature and conditions of African-American male psychosocial development. Among these conceptions are: precluded manhood and preempted male role responsibility; the political economy of surplus labor and disenfranchisement; the mismatch of skills mastery and skills demand; maginalization and invisibility resulting from precluded assumption of the manhood role; the subaltern character of the African-American male culture of resistance; the psychology of alienation and hopelessness; and defiance of negative predictions for success.

It has been argued that among the root causes of social disorganization and dysfunction in the African-American community is the fact that European Americans deprived the African-American male of the opportunity to play the male role; enslavement and subsequent economic and social policies have made it problematic for African-American men to be adequate husbands and fathers. They could infrequently provide economic security, and were not often in a position to provide physical security. After

the Emancipation Proclamation, African-American men, as marginal workers, soon became migratory workers and absentee fathers and husbands with insufficient income to turn their absence—due to seeking work—to the financial advantage of their families.

This preclusion of the discharge of the manhood role, disconcerting in its own right, was compounded by the prevailing image of the male in the New World as the "macho," all-powerful, dominating protector of women and children. Not only was the African-American male not of the valued color. he was also incapable of discharging the valued (albeit chauvinistic) male role, thereby distorting the ego development, social behavior, attitudes, and aspirations of African-American males.

It can be argued that a major cause of the disorganization, demoralization, and generally dysfunctional behavior of large segments of the African-American male population can be traced to the disproportionate weight on African-American males of a dysfunctional and depressed political economy. The dysfunctional character of the U.S. economy can be partially explained by surplus labor, the massive exportation of industrial jobs and commodity production, and changes in the means of production. Unskilled and semiskilled industrial jobs formed the backbone of the African-American economy during this community's most stable economic period; as the industrial demand for such workers was reduced, these workers suffered disproportionately. Even though the actual number of jobs has increased, the skill requirements for jobs not requiring a college education have also increased, and the economic return from these jobs makes it increasingly difficult for two jobholder families to make ends meet.

Alienation, situational depression, and hopelessness—common in the African-American male population—are thought to be reactive disorders, i.e., behavior disorders which develop in response to chronic dissonance in person-environment transactions. The classic treatment for mild reactive disorders is a reduction of the sources of dissonance in the life of the suffering person.

When one is in a subordinated position and is acculturated to a dominating culture, one is likely to internalize aspects of the dominant culture, even as one holds on to alternate cultural forms and develops some attitudes and behaviors that are resistant to the hegemonic culture. This condition has been referred to as subaltern status. It has been suggested that three phenomena are operating in the subaltern group of African-American males: patriarchy (borrowed from the dominant society), respectability, and reputation (at the other end of the continuum from respectability, with its historical roots in the rebellious slave, the trickster figure, and the legendary badman).

Respectability is less threatening to European Americans because it shares many of the core values of Anglo middle-class male culture, entailing control of women and children over whom they have proprietary rights within domestic units for whose material needs they provide, success with women, recognized leadership/dominance over other men, and demonstrable material success. Reputation is almost a substitute for respectability in that it is self-constructed, often from pretense, pose, and idealized image. One might say respectability is reputation earned on the basis of solid achievement instead of on the basis of symbols of achievement. African-American males were beginning to earn respectability in the sixties and seventies—when the United States began exporting the type of jobs that were enabling urban African-American men to build middle-class homes, own automobiles, and send their children to college. Accompanying the exportation of jobs was the automation—actually the "cybernation"—of many of the jobs that remained.

Implications for the Psychosocial Functioning of Children

While some African-American males are in serious trouble, the majority function quite adequately as males and as fathers. This defiance of the odds may be characteristic of African-American males and females, as is evidenced by the relatively large number of single-parent African-American families that are not only functional but are producing functional and achieving children. Some data suggest that the core problem is poverty and powerlessness rather than ethnicity and gender.

The values of fatherhood and patriarchy are widely embraced by African-American males. Problems arise in the capacity to consistently discharge the responsibilities of patriarchy in a society marked by inequalities and inadequacies in capital resources. The limited pedagogical capital and derivative human capital available to African-American males render them handicapped in their capacity to mediate the learning experiences of their children. Too often the competencies, skills, and understandings sought for African-American children are not possessed by their fathers, nor is tacit knowledge of how one goes about acquiring such learning.

(see **Myths and Realities** on page 27)

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Make Room for Daddy II:

The Positive Effects of Fathers' Role in Adolescent Development

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Few researchers have studied the specific effects of fathers on the psychosocial outcomes of their adolescent children. Moreover, much of the research that does exist on the father's role has typically focused on fathers' contributions to their children's psychopathological problems. This article continues to build on our understanding of the father's role in adolescent development by focusing instead on its beneficial effects. In light of the increasing number of single-father households and fathers serving as primary caretakers, this strength-based approach is particularly timely.

The authors performed an analysis of five journals from 1993-1997 that included adolescent development as a major topic (*Child Development*, *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *Journal of Early Adolescence*, *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, and *Journal of Marriage and the Family*) and selected for further inquiry any article whose title included something about parents, caregivers, family, or outcomes for youths from school age to adolescence. One-third of the studies referred to in the selected articles (n = 100) contained information from mothers only. Twenty-eight percent (n = 86) of the articles included information from parents and did not distinguish mothers or fathers. Among the 17% (n = 51) of studies that included intact and single-parent households—most of these single-mother households—only the mothers were asked to be respondents. Only six articles included information from fathers or other male figures.

One researcher suggested the following reasons for the absence of fathers in the child and adolescent psychopathology literature: (a) difficulty in recruiting fathers; (b) sex differences for base rates of parental psychopathology; and (c) sexist theories or outmoded assumptions about parental roles. We would add another reason for the absence of fathers in the adolescent development literature: policymakers have only recently become interested in the role of fathers. It is clear that more research about fathers' roles in adolescent development is needed.

Impact of Fathers on Infants and Adolescents

Although very little research has been done on the impact of fathers on their infant children, some of the literature on attachment indicates that fathers can have a special bond. Infants form an attachment to an adult on the basis of their history of interaction with that person, who could be mother, father, or other. Different styles of interaction have been observed among fathers in comparison to mothers in some studies (some see fathers as more tactile and physically playful), but these differences do not preclude the possibility of secure attachment.

Fathers' roles in their adolescent children's development have been investigated typically in terms of the father's physical absence from the family. A large number of studies have examined the effect of father absence on adolescent development. Once the socioeconomic differences between these families and dual-parent families are considered, however, the detrimental effects (e.g., poor school performance) of living in single-parent families often disappear. Father absence does not necessarily ensure that negative outcomes will occur, nor does it signify that father absence is the primary cause of negative outcomes.

In another study, this article's authors examined the effects of the amount of time fathers spent with their sons and the emotional support the fathers provided among urban African-American male adolescents. A relationship was found between time spent with fathers and lower levels of depression and anxiety. Emotional support from fathers was related to greater life satisfaction and self-esteem and lower levels of depression. Similar results were found in a larger sample that also included females.

The Current Study

In examining the relationship between the involvement of fathers in adolescent development and problem behavior, the authors surveyed 850 urban ninth graders from four public high schools in Michigan. It was predicted that father involvement in tenth grade would result in less problem behavior in eleventh grade after controlling for tenth-grade problem behavior. Similarly, problem behavior in tenth grade was expected to lead to less father involvement in eleventh grade after controlling for tenth-grade father involvement.

Students enrolled in the school system at the start of the 1994-95 school year with grade-

point averages of 3.0 and below were selected as participants for the study. Students who were diagnosed as being either emotionally impaired or developmentally disabled were excluded. The original sample included 679 African-American youths (80%), 145 White youths (17%), and 26 mixed African-American and White youths (3%), and was equally divided by sex. Participants were followed for three years.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted by trained African-American and White male and female interviewers. Students were called from their regular classrooms and taken to selected areas within the school to be interviewed for 50-60 minutes. Students who could not be found in school were interviewed in a community setting (e.g., home, Urban League office). Standard interview measures were used to assess problem behaviors including substance abuse, delinquency, and violent behavior. Father support and involvement were also assessed.

Findings

Results indicate that father involvement leads to less problem behavior among adolescents after controlling for problem behavior in the past, but that problem behavior has no effect on subsequent father involvement. These results support the notion that fathers' involvement in adolescent children's lives plays a vital role in helping them avoid problem behavior.

First, the longitudinal path from father involvement in tenth grade to less problem behavior in eleventh grade is compelling. Second, the fact that no such longitudinal path was found for problem behavior leading to less father involvement suggests that fathers are not deterred in their commitment to their children even if the children engage in problematic behavior. Third, the positive effects of fathers' school support on subsequent delinquency provides additional evidence that some aspects of fathers' involvement may also have positive effects.

Despite these findings, several limitations of the study should be kept in mind. The sample's limitation to youths with grade point averages below 3.0 somewhat limits the generalizability of the results. Another limitation is that results are based on self-report. Very little is known of the actual support and time fathers provided, yet the way youths characterize their fathers' involvement may be more meaningful psychologically than the objective truth. Another limitation is that the study did not assess community connections (i.e., social capital), assistance with career planning or future direction, or parenting style.

These limitations notwithstanding, this study helps chart a course for further research in terms of the role fathers play in the healthy development of their adolescent children. Future research might benefit from examining other adolescent outcomes such as psychological well-being, sexual behavior, and school achievement. A similar strengths-based approach would also help to identify intervention strategies to promote healthy relationships between fathers and their adolescent children and to illustrate the role fathers can play in adolescent resiliency.

One model of resiliency identified by researchers includes factors that compensate for the adverse effects of risk factors. These "compensatory factors" have a direct effect on outcomes and operate in a counteractive fashion to offset the potential negative consequences introduced by a risk. The results of the resent study indicate that fathers' involvement offsets the negative effects of prior problem behavior for predicting future problem behavior.

Adolescence is a time of experimentation, growth and hormonal change, parental and family separation, and development of new and independent social relationships. The more resources youths have to manage this stage of development and the fewer threats they endure, the greater the likelihood they will develop into healthy adults. This study provides evidence that fathers play a central role in the developmental process. ▣

Passages to Adulthood:

The Adaptation, Achievement, and Ambition of Children of Immigrants In Southern California

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The Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS), conducted in two parts in 1992 and 1995-96 (referred to as T1 and T2 respectively), followed the progress of a large sample of youths representing over 70 nationalities in two key areas of immigrant settlement in the United States: Southern California (San Diego) and Southern Florida (Miami and Fort Lauderdale). The original survey (T1) involved interviews with over 5,200 eighth- and ninth-graders from San Diego, CA (n = 2,420) and Dade and Broward County, FL (n = 2,843). This article focuses on study results that deal with the educational performance of the San Diego sample. The sample was drawn in the junior high grades, where dropout rates are relatively rare, to avoid the potential bias of differential dropout rates between ethnic groups at the senior high school level. Eligible students were U.S.-born but had at least one immigrant (foreign-born) parent, or were foreign-born and had come to the U.S. at an early age.

The second phase of data collection (T2), which also included in-depth interviews with the students' parents, used questionnaires developed for longitudinal and comparative analyses. This follow-up effort was done to ascertain changes over time in the children's family situation, school achievement, educational and occupational aspirations, language use and preferences, ethnic identities, experiences and expectations of discrimination, and social and psychological adaptation. By this time the youths had reached the final year of senior high school.

The San Diego Sample

The principal nationalities represented in the San Diego sample of the CILS are Mexican, Filipino, Vietnamese, Laotian (including Lao and Hmong), Cambodian, "other Asian," and Latin American. Mexicans constitute the largest immigrant population in both California and the U.S. Since the 1960s, Filipinos have formed the second largest immigrant population. In 1996, immigrants from Mexico, the Philippines, and Vietnam accounted for the majority (55%) of the 8.1 million foreign-born inhabitants of California.

The level of education of the immigrant parents of the youth in this sample varies greatly. Only a tiny proportion of Mexican and Indochinese fathers and mothers have college degrees (well below national norms), compared to 43% of Filipino mothers (well above national norms). Most of the more recently arrived foreign-born children from Mexico, Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia have parents who never completed high school. By T2, familes of about 55% of the students owned their own homes, but a cultural gap exists in this area, with 4% of Hmong families owning their homes compared to 89% of native-born Filipinos.

Nearly 75% of the San Diego youths lived in intact families, with significant variation in the family's level of cohesiveness, perhaps due to parent-child linguistic and cultural gaps. The families of youths born in Mexico emerge here as the most cohesive, as characterized by reported low levels of conflict. Contrastingly, the Hmong face the highest degree of dissonance between their native culture and American life.

Following this sample of students over time allowed for examination of their educational performance, their likelihood of dropping out of school before graduation, and the main determinants of these outcomes. One key question was whether the level of attainment exhibited by these children of immigrants matched, exceeded, or fell below the grade 9-12 average for the San Diego School District overall (the nation's eighth largest). A comparison of GPAs and dropout rates indicates that, at every grade level, the children of immigrants outperformed district norms, although the gap narrowed over time and grade level. Vietnamese and "other Asian" (Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Indian) students achieved the highest GPAs, although the Vietnamese have average dropout rates relative to other nationalities in the sample as well as an above-average number of school suspensions. Among immigrant families, the highest dropout rate was for "Hispanic" (mostly Mexican-origin) students, but even that rate was noticeably lower than the district norm, and slightly lower than the rate for non-Hispanic Whites. The lowest dropout rate was among the Laotians, while the Cambodians had the least school suspensions. The Filipinos performed above average on all outcome measures.

One reason for these students' above-average GPAs, despite socioeconomic and linguistic handicaps, is that they work for it. At both T1 and T2, students reported spending an average of over 2 hours per day on homework,

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with the foreign-born students compensating for language and other handicaps by significantly outworking their U.S.-born peers. From the end of junior high at T1, to the end of senior high at T2, the level of effort put into schoolwork increased across all nationalities. Moreover, in multivariate analyses at T1, the number of daily homework hours emerged as the strongest predictor of higher GPAs.

San Diego's children of immigrants are ambitious, and their goals remain stable over time. As early teenagers, 61% aspired to advanced degrees, and another 26% stated that they would not be satisfied with less than a college degree. Three years later, as the students completed high school, these proportions remained the same. The students were also asked for a "realistic" assessment of their chances of achieving their goals. At T1, 35% "realistically" expected to earn advanced degrees, and another 39% said that they would not be satisfied with less than a college degree. At T2, these proportions increased slightly—37% "realistically" expected to earn advanced degrees and another 41% expected to graduate from college—showing the resilience over time of these more realistic expectations. The proportion of those who, based on a realistic assessment, believed that they would not obtain a college degree dropped from 26% at T1 to 22% at T2.

Even more ambitious than these children are their parents. Asked what their parents' expectations were for their educational futures, the students reported that their parents expected them to achieve at a much higher level than they expected of themselves. For many immigrants, that was precisely the purpose of bringing their children to the United States. At T2, while 37% of the students expected to attain an advanced degree, 60% of their parents had this expectation; and while 22% of the children expected to stop short of a college degree, only 9% of the parents held such a low expectation. Parental expectations were significantly correlated with students' school performance.

Conclusion

The pattern revealed here is that falling behind in school or getting ahead is largely determined by the same set of factors. Children from intact families with both natural parents at home do much better—that is, they have higher GPAs, lower dropout rates and suspensions, and higher aspirations. This effect is even more pronounced in families with lower parent-child conflict. Similarly, children of immigrants from higher socioeconomic status families also have an advantage. Those whose parents have a college education perform much better academically and aspire more to advanced degrees when compared to those whose parents have less formal education. Remaining in school is related more to the mother's level of education than to the father's (partly due to father absence in a sizable proportion of these families). These same patterns exist for other indicators of socioeconomic status, such as home ownership and neighborhood poverty rates. Students who remain in school and achieve higher grades with fewer suspensions tend to attend suburban schools in higher-status neighborhoods. It comes as no surprise that a more cohesive, stable, and socio-economically resourceful home environment leads to higher educational achievement. In this respect, children of immigrants are no different from the native-born. The question then becomes, what factors other than intrafamily contexts influence who gets ahead? For both male and female children of immigrants, disciplined work habits and clear goals pay off handsomely in achievement dividends.

Also, high educational and occupational goals and values in early adolescence are closely associated with remaining in school and with better educational performance. A multiple linear regression analysis of academic GPAs at T2 found that high "realistic" educational aspirations at T1 were strongly and positively associated with high GPAs at T2. In addition, the higher the parents' achievement expectations as perceived by their children, the higher were the students' GPAs. Taken together, these results demonstrate that, even among students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, those with ambition and disciplined work habits early on were more prone to high academic achievement.

Finally, and even more significant in its effects, is the influence of peers. The worst outcomes were associated with having close friends who themselves had dropped out of school or had no plans for college. Conversely, the best outcomes were attained by students whose circle of friends consisted of largely college-bound peers. In a multivariate analysis, the index of friends with no college plans had the most significant and strongest negative effect on GPA. Currently an analysis is under way of the CILS data to disentangle the effects of ethnonational background on performance from those of family socioeconomic status, peer groups, school and neighborhood contexts, and the individual characteristics and drive of each student. ▣

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Agency and School Performance Among Urban Latino Youth

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This article examines the ways in which the academic performance of urban Latino adolescents is related to choices they make and activities that they engage in outside of school. The focus is on youth agency, defined as the ways in which youth make decisions and choices that affect their lives, and on the contexts in which adolescents exercise agency.

In conducting this study, three basic questions were considered: (1) What are the dimensions and characteristics of agency exhibited by the youth in this sample? (2) In what ways is youth agency fostered and mediated by others, especially parents? and (3) Is there evidence that the agency exercised by young people outside of school affects academic outcomes in any way? Families in the sample have participated in home and telephone interviews since 1989, when the target children began kindergarten. Data for the current study come from over 200 hours of interviews carried out over a two-year period with adolescents (in 6th and 7th grade), with their parents and with selected teachers.

Findings from this study suggest that positive school performance is associated with situations in which both parents and children exhibit agency within everyday family routines. Urban Latino youth are more likely to prosper academically when their parents are neither too restrictive nor too permissive. The optimal situation seems to be one where the children make choices in concert with their parents that are expressions both of child agency and of the parents' desire to monitor their children.

Individual Agency Situated Within a Sociocultural Context

Many studies of the disproportionate underachievement of minority and working-class youth in American schools focus on structural inequalities which are perpetuated and legitimized through the school system itself. In this view, individual families and students are treated as victims of overwhelming social forces which permit little in the way of individual agency. In this paper, on the other hand, structural conditions are seen as limiting individual choice and shaping the conditions in which individuals act; however, they do not predetermine ways in which individuals and families can or will respond. Here the daily routine of ordinary activities is seen as the anvil on which the reciprocal influence of humans and social systems is shaped.

This neglected element of social theory—the daily routine—provides a way to avoid placing causal priority in either social institutions or subjective individual intention. Human agency is possible because social processes and structures shape and are shaped by everyday living as well as extraordinary events. Thus, agency is treated as both product and process—i.e., it is not only the choices made, but the process of choosing—and is conceived not only in individual terms but also within sociocultural context.

Locating Youth Agency in Cultural and Family Context

While the families in the study seek to construct daily routines in the U.S. that are in accord with the cultural schemas brought from their home countries, they are simultaneously adapting to an urban Los Angeles setting that sets a number of challenges for them that they may not have faced before—such as jobs far afield from residences, the necessity of two incomes, or neighborhood gangs or drugs. On the other hand, an urban American setting may offer such positive features as less expensive schools that provide more services and activities for children. In raising their children, the parents in this sample uniformly espouse the values of respect for parents, family unity, and correct behavior. For them, home is the source of support and safety, while "the street" is a source of danger—not only of actual violence, but also of friends who may lead children astray. Within this context, youth agency can either be negative (defiance of home or school authority) or positive (actions that benefit children's education or family harmony).

A critical aspect of our model for looking at youth agency is that family routines are not solely determined by the sociocultural context in which families live, nor are they constructed exclusively by parents; they are co-constructed by family members. Agency is as much a group phenomenon as an individual one. The daily routine of the family is the crucible within which values are forged and reinforced and where activities and choices take place.

Choices Available to Individuals within Similar Contexts

Although home routines are constructed in response to similar conditions and with similar cultural beliefs and models, they are not identical from family to family, but offer a range of

choices for both parents and children.

Parental Agency. One example of the variation within daily routines and in choices of strategies within these routines is found in the protection of children from the dangers of the neighborhood. A common response of parents to the dangers of "the street" is that of closely monitoring their children's friendships. This response may range from keeping children inside to allowing visits to friends' homes, provided the friends' parents are known and the children return at a reasonable hour.

By the time their children reach the age of 12, some parents are permitting limited freedoms, such as allowing their sons to go to the mall by themselves or with a friend. While concerned about their sons' safety, these parents express the belief that their sons also need some "street smarts" in order to cope with life. Some parents structure such outside activities as soccer or the Boys or Girls Club to keep their child occupied in a controlled and supervised setting.

Youth Agency. Children have the opportunity to respond in a variety of ways to parental restrictions. A child's choice to conform to parent or teacher expectations is one example of decision making on the part of the child; a child need not make a choice in opposition to parents' or teachers' expectations or demands in order to exhibit the workings of agency. One strategy that children employ is to bend the limits of parental permission, with some children going out even when parents have told them not to. Even though they express agreement with the cultural model of studying in school, children exhibit a great deal of variation in the amount of energy that they actually choose to expend in their studies.

Youth Agency and Outcomes

Within an environment that is relatively restricted, the children in our sample showed a variety of choices, strategies, interests, and decisions. The data suggest a connection between opportunities for youth agency—facilitated by parents—and the children's performance and interest in school as measured by grades, teacher ratings, and standardized test scores.

Children whose parents tightly monitor and restrict their activity are not among the higher achievers in our sample. These students, most of whom are girls, accept school and schoolwork, and they voice attitudes that are accepting of school demands. However, they are not observed by their teachers to be engaged, self-motivated learners, and their grades and class performance do not appear to be strong enough to carry them beyond high school.

Children of seemingly permissive parents may rate high on an "agency scale," but they tend to make choices that are detrimental to school achievement. Their parents are not ideologically permissive—they express the same values that other parents in the study express about obedience, respect, and the need for schooling—but in practice they are less skilled at helping their children structure their choices. These children, all boys at this point in the study, often choose not to participate in class or not to complete homework. They also come from homes in which fathers are absent and mothers feel they are not supported in their attempts to guide or monitor their sons.

The more successful children in our sample tend to be the ones who are presented with and take advantage of more opportunities to make choices. Parents are still somewhat restrictive, but their children make choices, in concert with their parents, that are expressions both of child agency and of the parents' desire to monitor their children. These children may play on sports teams or in the band, or they may engage in hobbies or projects, often with their parents' support and participation.

Conclusions

Our observations suggest it is a greater degree of parent and youth agency, in the form of co-construction of positive environments and activities, that is associated with better academic outcomes by middle-school children. When children are tightly controlled—a parental response driven mainly by environmental threats—they go through the motions of studying but are not observed to be engaged, self-motivated learners. When children are left to their own devices without much parent control, they tend to flounder. But when children have interests and make choices, and the parents are also actively involved in structuring activities for and with their children, the academic outcomes are more positive. Classrooms and other settings are the everyday conduits through which social and cultural institutions affect children's experiences and their development and futures, and it is incumbent to stress the importance of improving the services delivered. At the same time, both parents and children have opportunities to shape the individual impact of these settings, through their choices of which activities to engage in, how much effort to invest in them, and how to carry them out. Macro-societal structures are powerful, but families neither feel they are hapless victims, nor does it seem they always are. ▣

Stressful Experiences and the Psychological Functioning of African-American and Puerto Rican Families and Adolescents

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This article is based on a study of 136 African-American and 77 Puerto Rican mothers and their adolescent children between the ages of 12 and 18, recruited from two geographically adjacent low-income, urban communities in the Northeast. The adolescent variables measured were self-reliance, self-esteem, problem behavior, psychological distress, and grades. Parental variables included economic resources and parenting (psychological distress, acceptance, psychological control). Perception of neighborhood characteristics assessed mothers' perceptions of such neighborhood features as neighborhood crime, neighborhood deterioration, and neighborhood resources.

Poverty and Education

In many urban areas of the Northeast, African-American and Puerto Rican children and families inhabit the poorest and most distressed neighborhoods. African Americans and Puerto Ricans in the United States have similar rates of poverty: 33% of African Americans and 39% of Puerto Ricans are poor. African Americans and Puerto Ricans also share some of the characteristics linked to poverty: single mothers head 48% of African-American homes and 43% of Puerto Rican homes. The poverty rates for African-American and Puerto Rican single-parent, female-headed households are 50% and 90%, respectively. The unemployment rate for African Americans and Puerto Ricans are 13% and 14%, respectively, rates that are more than twice that of Whites.

An area of the largest difference between African Americans and Puerto Ricans is in the area of educational attainment. Among African Americans, 7% have completed less than five grades in school, while 20% of Puerto Ricans have completed less than the fifth grade. Approximately 73% of African Americans, compared to 60% of Puerto Ricans, have completed high school. The high school completion rate ranks as a highly important marker: the poverty rate is 47% for African Americans, and 50% for Puerto Ricans, lacking a high school degree.

Study Results

The study examined the association of potential sources of stress (including family income, neighborhood crime, and safety) with mothers' psychological well-being and parenting. For African-American parents, the findings revealed that neighborhood safety was associated with mothers' psychological distress. Results also showed that family income was linked to mothers' acceptance, revealing that the more financial resources families had, the more accepting mothers were of their adolescents. The less financial resources the families had, the more that mothers were psychologically controlling. The more mothers perceived that their neighborhood was unsafe, the more psychologically controlling they were.

For Puerto Rican mothers, the more mothers perceived that there neighborhood was unsafe, the more the mothers reported psychological distress. Also, mothers' perception of the safety of the neighborhood was associated with their acceptance.

The study then assessed the association of mothers' well-being and parenting with adolescents' adjustment (self-esteem, psychological distress, problem behavior, grades). The regression of the measures of adolescent adjustment on mothers' psychological well-being and parenting revealed that, for African-American mothers and adolescents, mothers' acceptance was positively associated with adolescents' grades. Also, mothers' psychological control was negatively associated with adolescents' grades.

For Puerto Rican mothers and adolescents, mothers' psychological distress was positively associated with adolescents' psychological distress. Mothers' acceptance was negatively associated with adolescents' psychological distress. Mothers' acceptance was also negatively associated with adolescents' problem behavior.

Discussion

The findings were in line with past results linking stress to the well-being of ethnic minority parents and their youngsters. For both African-American and Puerto Rican mothers, the presumed stress of living in a neighborhood they considered unsafe was positively associated with

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psychological distress. For these families, the lack of safety means that dangers for themselves and their children may come in many forms (i.e., from a snatched purse, forcible entry into a home, or a drive-by shooting). These forms of stress are experiences about which the families have little control. Indeed, the communities in which the families live are ones in which violent crime and serious health crises unheard of in other communities are common and ongoing.

The findings also indicate that the safety of the neighborhood was linked to the parenting of the mothers. For African-American mothers, neighborhood safety was linked to their tendency to grant their adolescent autonomy and independence. Thus mothers were less likely to encourage self-reliance to the degree that they perceived their community as unsafe. This finding is consistent with past research suggesting that urban, ethnic minority families are less inclined to urge autonomy in their children because of fear for their safety. The lack of financial resources was also negatively related to mothers' encouragement of self-reliance.

For Puerto Rican mothers, perceptions of the neighborhood as unsafe were linked to mothers' acceptance. This finding is in line with past work showing that stressful experiences of parents are associated with the supportiveness of the home environment. Puerto Rican mothers coping with the stressful experiences associated with poverty may have fewer personal resources to address the needs of their youngsters. The continuing effort to address the negative life events and anxiety-provoking experiences associated with poverty may erode mothers' psychological resources. Indeed, Puerto Rican mothers may face the serious dilemma of whether to stay on the mainland and face the stressors of their living environment, or to attempt to return to or settle in Puerto Rico, where neighborhood conditions may be more favorable, but financial opportunities may appear relatively more questionable.

The links between parenting, parents' adjustment, and adolescents' adjustment revealed that, for African-American adolescents, acceptance was positively associated with adolescents' grades. This finding is consistent with those revealing the adolescents are more well-adjusted in the context of emotional support in the home. The findings also revealed a negative link between psychological control and adolescents' grades. This finding may indicate that parents' vigilance in supervising and monitoring their adolescent in a high-risk environment is a double-edged sword. Control may buffer adolescents from trouble and prevent them from venturing into questionable circumstances. But psychological control may be detrimental to the development of independence and self-reliance linked to school performance. In future research it is important to assess the nature of school task on which grades are based to determine why there may be a link to practices in the home environment.

For Puerto Rican adolescents, mothers' psychological distress was associated with adolescents' psychological distress. This finding may highlight the closeness and familism of Puerto Rican families and the degree to which problems within the family are shared across family members. The findings also illustrated the importance of emotional support in Puerto Rican families. Mothers' acceptance was negatively associated with adolescents' psychological distress and their problem behavior. Emotional support within the home may offset the effects of stressful experiences the family may face. Also, adolescents may be less inclined to engage in problem behavior in a supportive family context out of concern for the effects of their actions on others who clearly and strongly care for them.

Implications

The findings of the present investigation are important in that they confirm past findings, but also provide highly needed information on the experiences of Puerto Rican families. Additional work is needed, however, in such areas as the nature of stressful life events and their impact on the well-being of poor African Americans and Puerto Ricans. While there is considerable information on the poverty of these two groups, information is lacking, for example, on the stressful experiences linked to economic distress and the ways they influence the home environment and individuals' functioning. Thus we may know that poverty is associated with living in an overcrowded space, but we also need to know the impact of a crowded living space on, for example, the warmth of Puerto Rican mothers toward their youngsters. We know from the present study that mothers' warmth is associated with adolescents' adjustment. Also, the impact of feelings of isolation or alienation and their ramifications for the adjustment of both mothers and their adolescents needs to be examined. For Puerto Rican families and adolescents, the impact of moves between Puerto Rico and the mainland and the links between acculturation experiences and family well-being need to be examined.

(see **Stressful Experiences** on page 27)

Cultural Explanations for the Role of Parenting in the School Success of Asian Children

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The school success of Asian Americans has drawn attention from the popular media and from researchers in a number of fields. Although this view has contributed to an ethnic stereotype of Asian Americans as the "model minority," it has some basis in fact. As a group, Asian Americans have higher grade-point averages in high school and college and higher scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). Higher rates of completion of high school and enrollment in college have also been reported for Asian Americans than for all other ethnic groups.

Explanations of the school success of Asian-American students emphasize one of three basic elements: (a) effort on the part of the students (e.g., more time studying and fewer diverting activities such as dating and part-time jobs); (b) fostering and promoting of education on the part of the parents; and (c) cultural influences. This article focuses on the third category, looking specifically at the cultural basis of parenting practices that seem to foster academic achievement. The article concludes with a brief summary of the results of a recent study comparing the parental practices of European-American and Chinese-American parents.

Developmental Niche Theory/Ethnotheories

One explanation for the role of culture in a child's development involves developmental niche theory. Within this theoretical framework, the child's daily life is seen as culturally shaped, with each component or subsystem, referred to as "ethnotheories," relating centrally to the parents. Each ethnotheory is characterized as a separate level of parental influence that is shaped by culture. These levels operate as an integrated system, encompassing the parents' beliefs, their tasks or goals for parenting, the timing of these tasks, and their views of the child's nature and development. The developmental niche is then recast as an educational niche in which each ethnotheory is part of an integrated system to support the child's educational development. First, Asian parents espouse specific ethnotheories highlighting the importance of education. Then, these ethnotheories for education are reflected in broader cultural conceptions of the child, incorporating beliefs about child development and learning that are espoused in many parts of Asia.

Parents' Ethnotheories About Education. One Asian view holds that children are "like white paper" by virtue of their innocence and lack of knowledge. Consequently, parents must actively shape their children's experiences. Because young children learn through imitation, early educational intervention is regarded as essential. The importance placed on the parental role is also evident in the Japanese analogy of "cultivation." In Japanese, the word for cultivating a person is the same as that for cultivating a plant. Cultivation begins with the seedling and necessitates the gardener's care in trimming the plant's branches and leaves as it grows. This shaping and framing of the whole plant, however, should not be started too early. The gardener must wait for the plant's "inner tendencies" to emerge. Thus, the importance of the parents in providing the proper education to the child, when the child is ready, stimulates the child's proper growth.

Ethnotheories Specific to Parenting. For many Asians, particularly East Asians, efficacy in parenting is judged by how well the child does in school. The Asian notion of filial piety thus works in tandem with parental goals for the child's educational success. In order to honor their parents and family, children are raised to feel obligated to succeed in school. This emphasis on obedience and respect assures that children will follow through with parental goals.

Parental Involvement in School. Drawing again on the cultivation analogy, parents must begin early to provide the support necessary for the flourishing of the child's abilities. "Managerial," or "hands-on," involvement begins before the child enters school, with early tutoring by parents in writing, reading, and numeracy. One study indicates that more Asian-American parents (60%) reported teaching their children these basic skills when they were in preschool than did European-American parents (16%). In another study, Chinese parents claimed that they had taught their children certain basic skills before they entered kindergarten, whereas European-American parents often warned against such practices as creating "baby burn-out."

Asian-American parents' participation in school programs (referred to as "structural" involvement) is also most apparent during the child's early schooling to the extent that parents feel "culturally integrated" with the school. This cultural integration is

defined by the parents' coming to feel that the teacher and/or other faculty and administrators similarly value education and have high expectations for their students. In general, many immigrant parents also hold a great deal of respect for teachers and will seek out their advice and perspective on matters concerning the child.

Broad Concepts of Parenting

In attempting to define how culture shapes or defines parenting, this author has also examined broad concepts for parenting that exist in cultures—in other words, indigenous parenting concepts. These indigenous concepts provide an understanding of how the parental role is defined in terms of the responsibilities of parents. Some salient parenting concepts for the Chinese have been identified in this author's studies with immigrant Chinese families in the U.S.

For the Chinese, description of the parental role often emphasizes the notion of "guan," literally translated as "to govern." Guan also has a very positive connotation in China because it can mean "to care for" or even "to love" as well as "to govern." Parental care, concern, and involvement are thus synonymous with firm control and governance. According to one cross-cultural study of preschools, guan was most frequently used to describe the Chinese teacher's control and regimentation of the classroom. Control and governance are regarded as the role responsibilities of parents as well as teachers. Without guan, parents may be viewed as negligent and uncaring. Ultimately, this emphasis on control and governance is also reflected in children's perceptions of their parents' control. If Asian children perceive that parental control and governance reflect their parents' care and concern, then this provides compelling evidence of the differential meaning of control for Asians. This control is centrally related to the societal goals of harmonious relations with others, in that harmonious relations within the family itself serve to maintain the integrity of the family unit.

An alternative way of describing parenting style relates to the Chinese notion of "chiao shun," translated as "training," which involves a disciplined style of teaching or inculcating children. Specifically, chiao shun involves training children early to be self-disciplined and hard-working, while also providing children with familial investment, concern, and support.

Research on the Training Concept

A study by this author provides clarification of the cultural meaning of the training concept (chiao shun) by examining the parental ethnotheories and practices related to training. Two approaches were undertaken in a survey examining the cultural meaning of the training concept for Chinese parents. On the basis of questionnaires and personal interviews, a comparison was made between 140 Chinese-American parents and 64 European-American parents with respect to endorsement of the training concept, involving characterizations of three parenting styles defined as authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive. Correlations were then drawn between the training concept and parental goals and practices. Study findings include the following:

- The training parenting style, as well as parental goals emphasizing school success, are more important for Chinese parents than for European Americans, as predicted.
- The authoritarian parenting style was endorsed more by the Chinese parents than by the European Americans. Surprisingly, the Chinese also endorsed the permissive style more than the European Americans. These findings indicate that both the authoritarian and permissive typologies capture different aspects of Chinese parenting that cannot be captured with just one typology.
- Parents from the European sample who endorsed filial piety and excellence in schools as goals for their children also demonstrated use of the training concept and the authoritarian parenting style.
- Only the association between the goals for school success and managerial parental involvement differed across ethnic group, being much stronger for Chinese parents.
- The association between goals for school success and structural parental involvement was three times larger for Chinese parents, indicating that goals for school success may drive Chinese parents' involvement but not the involvement or practices of European-American parents.
- The associations between training and conceptualizations of parenting style established validity for training as a construct of parenting style for both ethnic groups although it was manifested in different parental practices for each group.
- Parental goals, especially those involving school success, appear to influence the parental practices of Chinese Americans, but not the practices of European Americans. ▣

Resilience
(continued from page 1)

adolescents' adjustment? What moderating variables might lessen any negative effects?

- What is the current state of parents' knowledge and perceptions of new technologies in classrooms? What are possible strategies for increasing the access of new technologies to families?
- What are the factors that moderate the risks of children in single-parent families for adjustment problems? What intervention and prevention efforts might be possible?
- What policies or practices of significant institutions in the lives of families (places of employment, schools, local community groups or social services agencies, state or federal government) might enhance the capacity of families to cope with the challenges they face?
- What cultural barriers affect the adjustment and well-being of immigrant families and their children? What are possible actions of schools, agencies, or government bodies that can lessen the burden of families making the transition to a new country?

The authors of the papers summarized in this edition of The CEIC *Review* were asked to address these questions from their multifaceted understanding of the impact of culture, economy, employment, poverty, and social policy on the family, in terms of parenting, child development, education, and the life success of our nation's youth. Several of the papers directly address maternal employment and its effects on the family, focusing as well on the ever-increasing number of single or sole-provider mothers (Florsheim; Hoffman; Lerner and Noh) and on the psychosocial effects of divorce on adolescents (Buchanan). Two papers focus on the role of the father, noting not only the phenomenon of paternal absence but also describing the positive outcomes that arise when fathers, whether present or "absent," are able to maintain a strong influence on their children (Gordon; Zimmerman, Notaro, and Salem). Several other authors focus on cultural aspects of parenting and child development, encompassing African-American, Asian-American, and Latin-American influences (Chao; Reese, Kroesen, and Gallimore; Rumbaut; Taylor, et al.). Others look closely at social and economic history as a way to illuminate possible solutions to the problems society faces today (Gallay and Flanagan; Vandell, Dadisman, and Gallagher).

A central outcome of this impressive body of work is to advance our current understanding of possible ways of promoting families' well-being and adaptation in times of stress and challenge. It is hoped that the contents of these pages will expand significantly what is known from the research base on resilience-promoting strategies and suggest policies and practices that have the capacity to significantly improve the educational achievement of children and youth. ▣

Well-Being
(continued from page 3)

child care available to families in need.

The research on economic hardship in families points to the efficacy of social support within the family system as a buffer against stress. But social support is a societal function, not merely an intrafamilial one. Health insurance is a good example of social support at the societal level. Health insurance and health services must be available in disadvantaged neighborhoods if poor families are to cope with the transition to the new economy. Already, steps have been taken to assure the portability of health insurance and to reduce the stress associated with changing jobs in the new economy. Additional steps in this direction are needed. In addition to health insurance, educational insurance is necessary to assure that workers can be retrained for changing jobs and all children can take advantage of the educational opportunities that this society provides. Flexible child care services will be necessary as well to assist working families with the care of their children. The new economic contract will not succeed unless it is connected to a new social contract insuring the health and well-being of all our children. ▣

Another Look
(continued from page 5)

assessed. The challenge facing child care researchers during the next 10 years will be to delineate further the processes and mechanisms that contribute to these conditional relations, including why developmental domains are differentially sensitive to child care and family parameters. In addressing this broader issue, understanding of developmental processes in general can be extended. ▣

Maternal Employment
(continued from page 7)

dual-career families, and employers identify these options as helpful in steering a solvent course though difficult economic times.

Quality of child care remains a significant variable when considering the effects of maternal employment. The Carnegie

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Council on Adolescent Development's recommendations for programs to engage adolescents during nonschool hours include:

- Tailoring program content and processes to the needs and interests of young adolescents;
- Recognizing, valuing, and responding to the diverse backgrounds and experience of young adolescents;
- Actively competing for the time and attention of young adolescents;
- Reaching out to families, school, and a wide range of community partners in youth development; and
- Enhancing the roles of young adolescents as resources in their communities.

To enhance the developmental prospects of children whose mothers are employed, and to enhance the productivity and self-esteem of these mothers, policymakers should consider how to harmonize the available research conclusions with the policy and fiscal issues of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. ▣

Paternal Involvement
(continued from page 9)

programs that provide them with marketable skills and adequate child care alternatives, enhancing their capacity to find—and keep—jobs. The impact of economic disadvantage cannot be diminished, however, without a clear understanding of the relationship between economic and psychological factors. An intervention program that focuses on role strain among inner-city African-American men might help couples negotiate co-parenting responsibilities, including the provision of financial support, and provide vocational training and job placement. Future research on the complex array of social and psychological factors that mediate the relationship between economic disadvantage and paternal absence will facilitate the development of viable intervention programs for nonresident fathers. ▣

Employment Status
(continued from page 11)

more recent Michigan study did not find this. Since maternal well-being has been found to relate to parenting, it has been suggested that maternal employment can benefit children through the higher morale of employed mothers. Recent evidence has been presented to support this possibility.

Third, a persistent hypothesis holds that employed mothers encourage independence, grant autonomy, and assign responsibilities among their children more than do mothers who are nonemployed. This behavior may have positive consequences for daughters but also has possible negative consequences for sons. ▣

Myths and Realities
(continued from page 15)

For children, perhaps the most negative consequences of the problematic conditions of African-American males are those associated with the public images promulgated by the media which, when covering African-American males, tend to emphasize: the substitution of reputation for elusive respectability; the disruptive and disturbing behaviors that are so often expressions of resistance to oppression and domination; and the absence of consistency, orderliness, and systematicity as they seek to creatively adapt to environments beyond their control. ▣

Stressful Experiences
(continued from page 23)

Finally, both African-American and Puerto Rican youngsters must master the task of negotiating social environments (school, commercial, media) in which their culturally based behaviors and values are often at odds with those that prevail in these social contexts. The psychological costs of the social adaptations that ethnic minority youngsters must make need to be examined. ▣

The CEIC
REVIEW

Sue Russell
Robert Sullivan
Editors

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